



**JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER
AND FORT POLK
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
Press Release
7073 RADIO ROAD
FORT POLK LA 71459-5342
Voice: (337) 531-4630
Fax: (337) 531-6014**



Release Number: 0507-01
FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact: Samantha Evans (337) 531-4630

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4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division gets new trucks

By Sgt. KEITH M. ANDERSON
4 BCT, Public Affairs Office

FORT POLK, La. – About 60 Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, participated in operator maintenance and wrecker classes on new vehicles from the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTV) at Fort Polk in April.

The 4/10 Patriot Brigade is fielding 130 FMTVs, consisting of four variations on the basic vehicle, built specifically to have commonality of parts to help with more efficient repairs and replacements.

The four versions are the M1078A1-82, a 2.5-ton cargo truck; M1083A1, a 5-ton cargo truck; the M1084A1, a 5-ton truck with a material handling boom; and the M1089A1, a wrecker, said Richard Scibelli, Modularity Coordination Cell site lead, General Dynamics IT Corporation.

The trucks range in price from \$150,000 to \$350,000 and offer several advantages to vehicles currently in operation.

They are more tactical than other vehicles now in use, because Soldiers can change the pounds-per-square-inch (PSI) of air pressure in the tires - from 8 PSI to 55 PSI - as the vehicle is moving, allowing for better traction on different terrains. There is also a runflat setting to rapidly inflate a flat tire using air from the other tires. After runflat has been used, the other tires are all fully-inflated as the vehicle is moving.

Also, the vehicles have larger engines than similar vehicles. The 5-ton truck comes with a six-cylinder,

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330-horsepower Caterpillar diesel engine, and the 2.5-ton truck has a 275-horsepower engine.

The FMTV vehicles are also more maneuverable than their counterparts, and the cab flips forward for easier maintenance access.

To Soldiers in the operator class, the new trucks were a hit.

“It has a smoother ride; it’s easier to steer, and the cab is roomier,” said Spc. Delainena Bellamy, a motor transportation operator in Golf Company, 94th Brigade Support Battalion. “Even the gas pedal is electrical. I think that’s pretty cool.”

Staff Sgt. Kyle Ignacio, howitzer section chief, Alpha Battery, 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery, said the new 5-ton trucks with the material handling boom would make it much faster and easier to load artillery ammunition.

“In the past it’s all been done manually, and that is really hard on Soldiers,” said Ignacio. It would take two Soldiers to lift a single crate of rounds onto the truck, but with the boom, a Soldier can lift a whole pallet, more than 20 boxes, onto the truck, he said.

For Soldiers in the maintenance class, the vehicles have positive and negative aspects.

“They are and they’re not easier to work on,” said Spc. Andrew Stout, a light wheel mechanic, Bravo Company, 94th BSB. “There are a lot more electrical systems, but the vehicles are a lot better than the old ones.”

Mechanics have a laptop-type computer that plugs into the dashboard of the truck to help diagnose and repair problems, said Bob Workman, master instructor, Dimensions International, Inc.

Though these trucks were first prototyped in 1991 and adopted into the Army in 1996, the FMTV vehicles the Patriot Brigade is getting are the latest versions - the “C7,” named after the Caterpillar engine. The vehicles have only been out about nine months, said Workman.

(Photos by Sgt. Keith M. Anderson)

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Staff Sgt. Kyle Ignacio, howitzer section chief, Alpha Battery, 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery, practices using the material handling boom on a Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV) at the Modularity Coordination Cell yard, April 18. The boom will help field artillery Soldiers to load and unload ammunition much more quickly, said Ignacio.

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The new Light Medium Tactical Vehicles have a more spacious cab, and more electrical parts. The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, is fielding about 130 LMTVs throughout April and May, in four configurations: the M1078A1-82, a 2.5-ton cargo truck; M1083A1, a 5-ton cargo truck; the M1084A1, a 5-ton truck with a material handling boom; and the M1089A1, a wrecker.

Fmtv4.jpg

Staff Sgt. Kyle Ignacio, howitzer section chief, Alpha Battery, 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery, practices using the material handling boom on a Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (LMTV) at the Modularity Coordination Cell yard, April 18. The boom will help field artillery Soldiers to load and unload ammunition much more quickly, said Ignacio.